

MENNONITE HISTORICAL BULLETIN

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No. 4

The Wandering Soul, A Remarkable Book of Devotion

IRVIN B. HORST

No book of Mennonite authorship has been more frequently reprinted—and presumably read—than *The Wandering Soul*.¹ Although no longer known to English readers, it is still in print in a German edition and cherished in many Amish households. The book has gone through no less than 90 editions in the Dutch, German, and English languages since it first appeared in the year 1635 at the town of Alkmaar in Holland. Who was the author of this remarkable book? What is the nature of its contents? Why did it become so popular? These are the questions one asks today about a book which so often turns up in grandfather's library or among the family heirlooms in the attic.

The author, Jan Philip Schabaelje, 1592-1656, was a Waterlander Mennonite, a figure of some note in his own church circles and in Dutch religious and literary life in general.² He came from Zeeland, from the island of Walcheren, where his family were millers. In his youth he did a great deal of versifying, for when the *Walchers Liedeboeck*, a poetical miscellany, appeared in 1611 it contained over a hundred of his poems. The next year he went to Amsterdam and made his way among the Mennonites there, engaged in the milling business, and continued to write. In 1620 he accepted the responsibilities of a minister (*dienaar*), but four years later moved to Alkmaar and became a fellow-minister of Hans de Ries. This was not successful, and in 1648 Schabaelje returned to Amsterdam where he spent the remainder of his life writing, publishing, and selling books.

Schabaelje's writings were chiefly of a devotional nature. Some of his early verse got into *Het Rijper Liet-boeckken*, an early Waterlander hymnbook, first published in 1624 by his friend Claes Jacobsz at the village of De Rijp. Other poems, including his better ones from a literary standpoint, appeared in *'t Gheestelijck Kruidt-Hofken* (The Garden of Spiritual Herbs) in 1629, also

published by Jacobsz. Much of his verse had literary merit and in style as well as in subject content anticipated the poetry of Dirk Camphuyzen and Jan Luiken, the most notable of the Dutch devotional writers during the 17th century.³

Schabaelje, as well as his publisher friend Jacobsz from De Rijp, was a member of a circle of religious seekers and devotional writers at Amsterdam. The group was likely never organized in a formal way, but its members met frequently and wrote much. Their activities were spiritualistic in emphasis with much concern about the cultivation of the inner life. In many ways they were similar to the later Collegiants, and the Mennonite members, particularly, had much in common with the Lamists who arose later in the century under the leadership of Galenus

(Continued on Page 2)

Biographical Sketch of Joseph Sohm

JOHN F. FUNK

(Until the discovery of this sketch among the literary records of John F. Funk, next to nothing was known about the translator of the *Martyrs' Mirror*. In the original copy many of the nouns are capitalized, and one of the sentences was cut into two, while two other sentences have been combined in editing the sketch for publication. Material in brackets was supplied by myself. J.C.W.)

Joseph Sohm was born in Germany, probably in the early sixties [1860-65]. He was of Catholic parentage, but after coming to America, he became a Methodist.

When he first came to Elkhart he was employed as compositor in the office of the Mennonite Publishing Company. Later he took a position as proofreader and translator. He translated among other articles and booklets *The Book of Martyrs*, the largest and most highly esteemed book ever published by the Mennonite people. It was printed in this country in 1747-8-9. The oldest editions were printed in the Holland [German] language by the Seclusionists, at Ephrata, Pa. It required three years of hard labor for 15 men to translate and print and bind the work. The old German editions were 11 x 15 inches and contained about 1500 double-column pages. These were printed in large type.

The book from which Mr. Sohm made his translation was a folio edition illustrated with many wood-cut engravings printed in Holland in 17-- [1685 ?].

Mr. Sohm also [labored] on this book for three years. While thus engaged he made a trip to Germany taking the Holland edition and the other books needful for the work with him, and on shipboard and in Europe when leisure time permitted he continued his work while on his journey. He wrote a small and distinct hand and when the work was completed he had ten thousand manuscript pages, and when these were printed we had a book containing over one thousand, royal octavo double-column paper, which [was] a beautiful volume, illustrated, con-

(Continued on Page 7)

**Verbolgh der Collation
vande Wandelende Ziele met
Symeon Cleophas.**

**Verhandelen
De Ghechiedenissen des Ouden Testa-
ments van Abraham af tot op de Destru-
ctie Jerusalems toe.**

**Vermeerdert
Met meer Copere Plaetgens als opt boec
oefen gebruykt.**



r'Amsterdam,

**By Ian Albertsz. Boeck-verkooper op de
Nieuwen-Wijk/ int A B C.
Anno 1641.**

Title page from the 1641 Dutch edition of *The Wandering Soul*. Translated it reads, *Continuation of the Colloquies of the Wandering Soul with Simon Cleophas, Treating the History of the Old Testament from the Time of Abraham until the Destruction of Jerusalem*. The motto in the emblem is, "Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow."

THE WANDERING SOUL

(Continued from Page 1)

Abrahamsz. Other members of the group were Pieter Pietersz and Judith Lubberts, both Mennonites and writers of devotional literature. Lubberts, a poetess of some ability, was betrothed to Schabaelje but this was dissolved in 1629, apparently for religious reasons. At least Lubberts joined the Catholics during the same year, and in so doing preceded another Mennonite of her time and the greatest of all Dutch literary figures, Joost van den Vondel. Robert Friedmann has written an excellent introduction to the writings of Pieter Pietersz and Schabaelje, but it is confusing to consider these writers pietistic rather than spiritualistic.⁴

The immediate background, then, which shaped *The Wandering Soul* was 17th century Dutch spiritualism. In subject matter it was chiefly historical, but in purpose it was a work of devotion. In the preface the author described it as "stichtelijck en nuttelijck" (devotional and useful)—practical edification. This becomes evident too from the devotional tract to which it is appended, *Lusthof des Gemoets, inhoudende verscheyden Geestelijcke Oeffeningen* (A Pleasant Garden of the Mind, Containing Various Spiritual Exercises). This title, Schabaelje informed the reader, may also be given to the second part of the book.

Schabaelje's books in general were works of spiritual and ethical edification. *Historische beschrijving van het leven Jesu Christi* (An Historical Description of the Life of Jesus Christ), first published in 1647 by Jacobsz, encouraged the reader to imitate the life of Christ. *Metamorphosis*, the last of his books and published a year after his death, was a dialogue between an historian and a pilgrim intended to show man's true nature in Christ. Schabaelje was also a promoter of unity among the Dutch Mennonite groups. To this end he drew up a confession of faith, *Vereenighing van de principale artijckeln des geloofs* (A Union of the Principal Articles of Faith), which came out in 1640 and was several times reprinted.

In Dutch *The Wandering Soul* was never published as a separate book. It was always a supplement to the preliminary work, *Lusthof des Gemoets*. (Except for the illustration reproduced here from the 1641 edition the book never had a separate title page. This 1641 title page actually pertains only to the third part of *The Wandering Soul* or the dialogue with Simeon Cleophas.) The two works were separated when the German translation was made in the 18th century, and *Die wandelnde Seele* appeared as a unified and in-

dependent work. It has remained so throughout the many German editions in both Europe and America. Since the English translation was made directly from the German the same has been true of the various English editions. The supplement has outlived and become more important than the first part of the book.

In the early editions the title in Dutch was *Collatien der wandelende Ziele* which later was changed to *Samenspraaken der wandelende Ziele*. The form of the work, as the title suggests, was that of a colloquy or dialogue. Schabaelje refers to Erasmus in the introduction and he was no doubt aware of the popularity of his fellow countryman's colloquies in both the Latin and vernacular languages of Europe. The form was a popular one in the Middle Ages and later and employed for edificatory treatises as well as controversial ones. More specifically, however, "collatie" referred to a religious discourse or sometimes to a short devotional talk or sermon. Schabaelje was also aware of the dual meaning of the term and toyed with the idea of the Wandering Soul collating the records of history with actual eyewitness accounts from Adam and Noah.⁵ He also knew that much of his work amounted to a paraphrasing of his sources, particularly the Scriptures. This method, he explained, possibly to answer criticism, was used acceptably and with much profit by Erasmus, Karel van Mander, Du Bartas, and others.⁶

To the first edition of *Lusthof des Gemoets* (1635) Schabaelje appended, seemingly as an after thought, two colloquies in which a pilgrim conversed with Adam and Noah. This pilgrim character was named the Wandering Soul and represented the spiritual nature of every earnest Christian who longed for counsel from men of faith in the past. The creation of this type of a character appears to have been original with Schabaelje. Beginning with the edition of 1638 a third colloquy was added, that of the Wandering Soul with Simeon Cleophas. This dialogue, in comparison with the former two, is a greatly expanded one. In the duodecimo edition in 1641 it runs on for more than 400 pages and covers a period of history from the time of Abraham to the year 109 A.D. Simeon was taken from the Ecclesiastical History of Eusebius, where he is reported to have been a contemporary of Christ and Paul and to have witnessed the destruction of Jerusalem.

The *Lusthof* with its appended colloquies was a successful work and at least 14 editions appeared in Dutch during the lifetime of the author. In 1656, the year of Scha-

baelje's death, a revised edition appeared which contained two additional colloquies — the Wandering Soul with Jacob and Joseph—and a new set of etched illustrations. The earlier editions were illustrated with rather crude but expressive woodcuts. The revision must not have been successful, for all future editions omitted the new dialogues as well as the new illustrations. In 1706, after more than 35 editions had been printed, the book was graced with a new set of etchings by Jan Luiken. This artist, it will be recalled, had created the illustrations for the second edition (1685) of Van Braght's *Martyrs' Mirror*. The combination was ideal: the baroque style of Luiken interpreted well the religious fervor of Schabaelje's characters.

All told more than fifty editions of the work appeared in Dutch until 1768. Sometime in the 18th century the dialogues were translated into German. The translator is not known for certain, but I. Daniel Rupp, the English translator in 1834, believed he was Benedict Brackbill, the well-known Swiss Mennonite leader and pioneer settler in Pennsylvania. Sufficient evidence for this view is lacking but all the German editions contain the initials B.B.B. as those of the translator. The translator had a very high opinion of the dialogues, for in his preface he is bold to accord it a place alongside the Bible itself. The earliest German edition known by the writer of this article is that of 1741, printed by Johann Conrad Mechels at Basel. This edition, however, is the fourth, so that the original work likely appeared in the 1720s if not before.

At least thirteen German editions were printed in Europe. Most of these were from the press of the Von Mechels firm at Basel but some appeared at Frankfurt and Stuttgart. The German edition was brought to America, and in 1768 the first edition on this side of the Atlantic was published by Christopher Saur at Germantown. Eighteen additions in German appeared in this country, most of them in the 19th century, but one, called the 14th edition, was printed in 1919 by the Mennonite Publishing House at Scottdale, Pennsylvania. More recently, in 1952, J. A. Raber of Baltic, Ohio, published a German edition which is still in print.

The popularity of *Die wandelnde Seele* in America assured its translation into English. This was done by I. Daniel Rupp and first published by him in 1834 at Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. Subsequently five English editions appeared in Pennsylvania and two in Virginia. The English translation has not been a very sat-

(Continued on Page 4)

News and Notes

FAMILY HISTORIES. They often appear unannounced and in a limited number of copies. Two were recently published in Lancaster County. *Descendants of Jacob M. Horst*, by Frances W. Hurst, was published by the author, printed at Ephrata, Pa., and without date. It has 41 pages and is priced at \$1.50. A larger work, at the same price, is *A Family History of the Descendants of Isaac and Catherine (Witwer) Weaver, Including Some of Their Ancestry*, by W. Banks Weaver, without place or date of publication. It has 102 pages, is illustrated, and is partially indexed. Both of these books can be obtained from Weaver Book Stores, Lancaster and New Holland.

LIST OF PUBLISHED GENEALOGIES. Speaking of Mennonite family histories, more than usual commendation is due Nelson Springer, curator of the Mennonite Historical Library at Goshen College, for the full list he compiled. It appeared under "Genealogy" in volume two of *The Mennonite Encyclopedia*. Spread over eight pages it must be a definitive bibliography of known published genealogies of Mennonites. It includes American Mennonite families both of Swiss and Russian (Dutch-German) extraction, with a supplement of Dutch and German Mennonite names. It represents much painstaking work and is an invaluable source for anyone interested or working in the general field of Mennonite genealogy. One may express the hope that it will reappear as a separate publication.

DIRK PHILIPS. This is a name to watch, for there is some new and promising interest in him, both scholarly and lay. Dirk Philips, or Dietrich Philip, as his name occurs in the German editions of his *Enchiridion*, has been pretty much under the shadow of Menno Simons studies. It appears, however, that he is now becoming a subject for independent study and research. William E. Keeney, instructor in Bible at Bluffton College, has completed a study of Dirk in the form of a Th.M. thesis at Hartford Theological Seminary. According to announcement in a recent issue of *The Budget*, J. A. Raber, an Amish publisher at Baltic, Ohio, will bring out a new edition of Dirk Philips' works. The current issue of *The Mennonite Quarterly Review* contains an article, "The Christology of Dirk Philips," by Cornelius J. Dyck.

The general impression of Dirk has been a not too favorable one. He is seen as an excessively severe disciplinarian with a rather morose personality. It is true that he was a

leading exponent of the ban and shunning, but there was another side to his leadership. He was a deeply spiritual man, as his writings reveal, full of warmth and fervor, from which any Christian, modern or 16th century, may profit. His writings are sizable in amount and high in theological perspicacity. His portrait indicates a serious but genial mien, an appearance which reminds one of Mennonite piety at its best. Incidentally, from the standpoint of scholarship, more progress has been made on the writings of Dirk Philips than on any other Anabaptist or Mennonite figure. A textual edition of all his writings, including letters and hymns, with a full apparatus of notes and bibliography, was published in volume ten of the *Bibliotheca Reformatoria Neerlandica* in the Netherlands in 1914. This has not been done for Menno Simons. Hans Denck, it appears, will be the next figure to be given this consideration. The *Täuferakten-Kommission* has begun the publication of Denck's writings, of which the first two volumes have already appeared.

SIT-DOWN PREACHERS. "At this place I also attended a Mennonite preaching service. It was of the Frisian persuasion, and the minister sat and preached. They sang our psalms and also prayed for the magistrate." The mayor of the town of Harderwijk, in the Netherlands, wrote this in his journal at the time of a visit to Amsterdam about 1640. The picture is that of the minister in the role of teacher or admonisher rather than that of a pulpit figure or orator as was the case in the Reformed Church. The mayor, of course, was a member of the state Reformed Church. (*Amstelodamum*, XX (1923), p. 30.)

ARTICLES IN CONFERENCE PERIODICALS. Articles of Mennonite historical note often appear in

the missionary periodicals published in the various conferences. For example, "History of the Mennonite Churches in Stark County, Ohio," by O. N. Johns, appeared in *The Ohio Evangel*, XI, 3 (May-June, 1957). *The Gospel Evangel* (Indiana-Michigan), XXXVIII, 2, (March-April, 1957), carried a biographical account of the life work of Ira S. Johns, written by D. A. Yoder.

READERS' GUIDE. An occasional index to periodical literature about Mennonites and Amish, possibly an annual bibliography, might help those interested to keep abreast with some valuable materials. *Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature* does keep one informed to some extent, particularly about articles appearing in the better-known national magazines, but many articles in smaller periodicals go by the board. The article by David L. Souder, "'Walk Ye in the Ways of the Lord . . .,'" which appears in this issue of the *Bulletin*, provides a sympathetic close-up of cultural change among Amish in Howard County, Indiana. The article is of a literary nature and as such depicts the more human aspects of change. It originally appeared in *The University of Virginia Magazine*, I, 4 (Easter, 1957). Because we believe it deserves a Mennonite audience also, as well as to be on record in a Mennonite source, it is reprinted here.

NEWSPAPER FEATURES. Some very much worthwhile articles also appear in newspapers. Recently we saw a series of five prepared for the *Wooster Daily Record* by Alma Kaufman, a member of that newspaper's staff. The series, which ran March 16, 20, 27, and April 5 and 20 of this year, is about the history, life, and customs of the Amish in eastern Holmes County, Ohio. It is well written, factual, and illustrated.

(Continued on Page 4)

THE CHRISTIAN CONGREGATION

This is a description or lifelike portrait of the Christian congregation, how it goes on here in the first place in the Spirit, and hereafter in the perfection of heavenly existence. For in the first place the Holy City is the congregation, whose citizens are the Christian believers and members of the household of God (Eph. 2:19), and it is called a city for the reason that as in a city there must be concord; the citizens must hold firmly together, living and conducting themselves according to the same polity, law, and statutes, if the city is to continue to exist. So it must also be in the congregation: there must be unity of Spirit and of faith (1 Cor. 1:9; 10:21; Rom. 12:16); there the same rule of the divine Word must govern the walk of its members, and the divine polity which this city has received of God must be concordantly observed. Therefore also the prophet (Ps. 122:3) declares that Jerusalem is built as a city whose citizens are united, whereby there is portrayed to us the unity of the congregation of God, of which the Scripture says much (Eph. 4:3; Col. 3:5; Gal. 3:28; John 17:11).

—DIRK PHILIPS, (*Spiritual and Anabaptist Writers*, p. 255.)

NEWS AND NOTES

(Continued from Page 3)

FLORIDA MENNONITES. A well-written account of Mennonites in Florida, as seen by John Umble, appeared in *Mennonite Life*, XII, 3 (July, 1957), a periodical of general cultural and religious interest to Mennonites, published at Bethel College, North Newton, Kansas.

MENNONITES AND THE CIVIL WAR. With the Civil War centennial approaching, historians and journalists, particularly, are stirring the past for new subjects. Roger P. Bristol, a scholar with considerable training and experience in the field of American history, located at the University of Virginia, has begun a study of the impact of the War between the States on the Peace Churches. We have books on Mennonites in relation to the two World Wars but no treatment of the effects of the Civil War. Such an account is needed and will be welcomed.

CLASSIC ANABAPTIST WRITINGS. For the first time, one suspects, the writings of representative Anabaptist authors have been included among the classic literature of the Christian Church. Volume twenty-five of *The Library of Christian Classics* is entitled *Spiritual and Anabaptist Writers*. It is just out and may be had from Westminster Press at Philadelphia at the price of \$5.00. The volume is edited by Prof. George H. Williams of Harvard, with a section on "Evangelical Catholicism" edited by Prof. Angel M. Mergal of the Evangelical Seminary in Puerto Rico. Prof. Williams' approach is a very comprehensive one to what he calls "the Radical Reformation." This he subdivides into three main groupings, "the Anabaptists proper, the Spiritualists, and the Evangelical Rationalists." Mennonites in general hold to a more particularistic definition of Anabaptism and would differ with Williams. However, the book is a very useful one and brings together an important collection of sources in the English language. Mennonites will be particularly interested in the "Confession" of Obbe Philips, which heretofore has not been available in English.

Dirk Philips is very well represented in this volume by 33 pages from one of his best pamphlets, *Van die Ghemeynte Godts*. Menno Simons, on the other hand, is given a place after Dirk Philips with nine pages of text from one of his lesser writings, *Sommige Vragen*, on the ban. This does not do justice to the amount and quality of his writing, not to say anything about his more constructive emphases and spiritual concerns.

THE WANDERING SOUL

(Continued from Page 2)

isfactory one. It was translated from the German rather than from the original language, and a comparison with the Dutch indicates that much has been lost, not only in style but also in nuances of thought. The title "Wandering Soul" is rather unfortunate. "Pilgrim," as the 1838 edition printed at Pittsburg had it, is much better, but even "pilgrim soul" is not good idiomatic English. An uninspired translation doubtless hastened the end of this devotional book in the English-speaking world.

To what may we attribute the success of *The Wandering Soul*? It was in demand not only among Mennonites in both the Old World and the New but also found a wide circle of readers in other groups. The publishers of the book at Harrisburg, Pittsburg, and Philadelphia were not the ones who catered to Mennonite readers.

Part of the answer pertains to the literary quality of the book. In conception it was original and imaginative. The form, that of the colloquy, was a popular type of the period. The skillful use of conversation breaks the monotony of what would otherwise be an extended historical account. Talk as Schabaelje used it also created character. The persons in the dialogues, especially the Wandering Soul, are often sentimental, but they are at least warm and human. As a whole the work is extremely readable and slanted to meet the interest of the common man.

The book also had appeal as an account of sacred history interwoven with events from the secular past. The German translator recommended it highly as a means of instructing youth. As a reliable historical account, however, the book is very weak. Not all of Schabaelje's sources were dependable and it appears that he added some opinions of his own. Nevertheless it was valued as a useful account of biblical history. Since this was the case one can easily understand that when the patrons of the book became better informed it was no longer in demand.

The devotional nature of *The Wandering Soul*, however, was its principal asset, especially for Dutch readers. The particular piety which it reflected, as we have indicated above, was spiritualistic. It was a kind of *vade mecum* of a movement which flowered in the 17th century in the Netherlands. The religious fervor which it generated lasted well into the 18th century. This explains, likely more than any other reason, why the book attained as many as 50 editions in the Low Countries.

To endeavor to revive *The Wandering Soul* for modern readers

would most certainly be futile effort. The dialogue form is out of date, and the simple charm of the conversation would likely elude the translator if it was done in the English language. It has little value as an historical work. Its concern with practical piety, however, and the concept of the Christian life as a pilgrimage are an integral part of the Anabaptist understanding of the Christian life and valid in any age.

FOOTNOTES

¹ Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* might come up for consideration as the most widely reprinted book if the question is asked in terms of Anabaptist books, especially if one accepts a comprehensive definition of the term. John Bunyan, it is true, was an English Anabaptist, in the sense that Baptists were popularly so called. He became a member of the group in 1653 and soon after began to preach the Gospel. The metaphor and theme employed in his great book is reminiscent of Anabaptist views. As long as one accepts a particularistic definition of Anabaptism and a comprehensive one of Puritanism John Bunyan will be classified as a Puritan. This is the case at present among both literary and church historians.

² For information concerning Schabaelje I am indebted to the article in the Dutch biographical dictionary, *Nieuw Sederlandsch Biografisch Woordenboek*, vol. IX, cols. 953-54, and to the article by H. J. Wijman, "Judith Lubberts, een Amsterdamsche Dichteres uit de 17e Eeuw," *Amstelodamum*, vol. XXXV (1938), pp. 41-79.

³ Wijman, "Judith Lubberts," pp. 54-57.

⁴ Robert Friedmann, *Mennonite Piety through the Centuries, Its Genius and Its Literature* (Goshen, Indiana, 1949), pp. 111-15.

⁵ See the "Voor-Reden" in the 1641 edition, fol. A2-v 1.

⁶ *Ibid.*, fol. A4-r.

AMERICAN EDITIONS OF
THE WANDERING SOUL

1. Editions in the German Language

1768. Die wandlende Seel, das ist: Gespräch der Wandlenden Seelen mit Adam Noah und Simon Cleophas; verfasst die Geschichten von der Erschaffung der Welt an biss zu und nach der Verwüstung Jerusalems. Daran ordentlich zu erschen, wie eine Monarchie und Königreich auf die andere folget, wie diese angefangen jene aber vergangen, und auch ausführliche Verlauff der Zerstörung Jerusalems. Durch Johann Philip Schabaelje. Christopher Saur at Germantown, Pennsylvania.
1771. Die wandlende Seel . . . die zweyte Auflage. Christopher Saur at Germantown, Pennsylvania.
1794. Die wandlende Seel . . . die dritte Auflage. Peter Leibert at Germantown, Pennsylvania.
1805. Die wandlende Seel . . . die vierte Auflage. Michael Billmeyer at Germantown, Pennsylvania.
1822. Die wandlende Seele . . . John S. Wiestling at Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.
1833. Die wandlende Seele . . . G. S. Peters at Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.
1833. Die wandelnde Seele . . . J. Howe at Philadelphia for G. W. Wentz and Son at Philadelphia.
1834. Die wandelnde Seele . . . J. Howe at Philadelphia for G. W. Wentz and Son at Philadelphia.

(Continued on Page 8)

A Conference Historian Was Elected

LAURENCE M. HORST

(This article is reprinted from *The Missionary Guide*, the missions periodical of the Illinois Conference, the issue of April 1957. It contains a number of excellent ideas which deserve to be shared with other conference and local historians throughout the church. Used by permission. Ed.)

At the fall session of the Illinois Mennonite Conference, 1956, the Christian Education Cabinet presented the name of Arthur W. Nafziger to serve as our first conference historian. Brother Nafziger has been asked by the conference to serve in this capacity and has accepted this position.

In the February issue of *The Missionary Guide*, page seven, is an article entitled, "From the Conference Historian." In this article our historian suggests that, "each congregation have a local historian . . . an individual who by inclination and talent is fitted for the office" Our historian says further—

"We need to record our present activities in furthering the cause of Christ that those that follow us may learn from our experiences. . . . Many of our homes have items of historical value forgotten in attics, closets, or on shelves, such as letters, programs, pictures, books, and scrapbooks"

We are indeed fortunate to have a man in the Illinois Conference who is willing to give the time and effort necessary to carry on an active program of historical significance that will reach into our local churches.

By this time all of our congregations have given thought to the matter of having a historian. When decision is made by the church the name should be submitted to the conference historian Arthur W. Nafziger whose address is Hopedale, Illinois.

SUGGESTION FOR THE LOCAL HISTORIAN

- I. Cooperate with the conference historian by:
 1. Calling to his attention matters of historical value within the state.
 2. Supervising the preparation of materials from the local church at his request.
- II. Foster in the congregation an appreciation for our heritage.
 1. Find and preserve items of historical value.
 2. Encourage the production of articles of historical interest for church papers.
3. Keep a file of items of outstanding historic value in the local church.
- III. Strive to preserve all current historical matters.
 1. Programs, bulletins, special meetings, etc.
 2. Reports to the congregation by various church officers.
 3. Newspaper clippings relative to the local congregation or her members.
 4. Encourage the church to keep a careful system of records.
 5. Plan a historical scrapbook.
 - (1) This scrapbook should have logical time-wise progression.
 - (2) It may contain clippings and pictures from local and church papers.
 - (3) Each clipping or page of clippings should be carefully dated including the month and the year.
 - (4) Pictures may be placed in among the clippings as they are available. All pictures should be carefully dated.
 - (5) Letters and articles from Oldtimers whose information will be lost when they are called away in death.
 - a. If the person cannot write then the local historian or someone of his choosing could take the story and then put it into writing and turn it over to the church's historical scrapbook or file.
 - b. Testimonies, outstanding decisions, lessons learned from life, and church-related experiences could be among the matters to get from our older members.
 - (6) When one scrapbook is completed it may be carefully indexed to make the material in it readily accessible.
 - (7) It is not impossible to think of a table of contents in such a scrapbook if careful time progression has been kept in mind throughout.
 - (8) A plate listing the illustrations would also have value.
 - (9) When such a book is completed it could be dated for the period of
- IV. Some advantages of a scrapbook.
 1. It keeps the materials together and in sequence.
 2. It makes tables of contents and indexes possible for quick reference.
 3. It makes it possible to keep a lot of materials together in a small space and facilitates the keeping of historic materials.

Note: All materials should be of the best quality of material so that they will not dry out and crack in a few years.

time it represents and placed in safe keeping.

IV. Some advantages of a scrapbook.

1. It keeps the materials together and in sequence.
2. It makes tables of contents and indexes possible for quick reference.
3. It makes it possible to keep a lot of materials together in a small space and facilitates the keeping of historic materials.

Note: All materials should be of the best quality of material so that they will not dry out and crack in a few years.

The fifth ordinance is the command of love which Christ gave his disciples, saying (John 13:34, 35; 15:12, 17): A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another, as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love to another. From this it is easy to understand that pure brotherly love is a sure sign of genuine faith and true Christianity. But this is true brotherly love, that our chief desire is one another's salvation, by Scriptural instruction, admonition, and rebuke.

—Dirk Philips

AS OTHERS SEE US . . .

James Hastings Nichols, Professor of Church History, University of Chicago, on the subject of the denomination as a modern church form:

The effect of this synthesis of faith and culture on ecclesiastical institutions must also be observed. Instead of the "church" and "sect" as the classical forms of ecclesiastical institution, modern church history is characterized by the "denomination." Even bodies like the Roman Catholics, who have wished to remain churches, or the Mennonites who have intended to be sects, have been forced to become, for most practical purposes, "denominations."—*History of Christianity 1650-1950. Secularization of the West* (New York, 1956), p. 12.

[The views of out-group writers are often helpful towards a true understanding and evaluation of our Mennonite life in the past and present. From time to time we shall note a few of these without comment on our part and in context as much as possible. The statements will be of an historical nature. Ed.]

"Walk Ye in the Ways of the Lord . . ."

JEREMIAH 7:23

DAVID L. SOUDER

Over a hundred years ago, a group of Amish broke with the main body of their church and moved westward from Pennsylvania. Most of these dissenters settled in central Ohio, but a few families pushed on into Howard County, Indiana, and established a small colony. They were skillful, hard-working farmers, and as they prospered they spread out over the surrounding area until their tidy farmyards and well-cultivated fields became a trademark of the County. They rigidly adhered to their strict discipline and avoided all "worldly" influences. At a time when technology was revolutionizing agriculture, they continued to farm as their forefathers had long before. Except for the McCormick reaper and the threshing machine, they scorned modern farm machinery, and when electricity, the telephone, automobiles, movies, and television came onto the American scene, the Amish denounced them as "worldly" and continued to use their kerosene lamps and horse-drawn carriages and farm implements.

As long as the younger men remained on the family farm, the Amish could keep pace with their modern neighbors by sheer manpower. But today most of the young people are leaving the old sect, and their parents are losing the fight against progress. Many of the sons and daughters are joining the more progressive Mennonite sect, which allows them to dress in modern fashion, to own cars and tractors, and have electricity and most of the conveniences of twentieth-century living. A few have completely forsaken the "old ways," moving into town and completely adopting the "worldly" way of life. Only fourteen or fifteen families still remain true to the strict Amish discipline. As the tide of modernity gains momentum, even this hard core is eroding away.

One branch of my own family left the sect before the turn of the century, when my great-grandfather became an Evangelical minister, travelling from one town to another preaching in German. He kept the farm, however, and it is now run by my uncle. Since it had been located in the very heart of the Amish colony, it was still surrounded on all sides by Amish holdings when I first began to spend my summers on the farm. Among my earliest memories of those days are the swaying Amish buggies, drawn by handsome Morgans, clattering over the covered bridge a few yards down the road

from us. The children would peep shyly through the tiny oval windows, while their parents gazed stoically ahead, and occasionally a snatch of their conversation, oddly phrased in a Germanic dialect, drifted hollowly back to me. Sometimes they would pass on a late Sunday afternoon, on the way home from their all-day church meeting, while my cousins and I were swimming in the gravel pit next to the road. I always had an uneasy feeling, for I knew that they disapproved of such carryings-on on the Sabbath. Or during harvest the whole family of the Amish farm east of us would appear in the dusty-golden wheatfield across from the house, the bearded men swinging scythes while the women and older children tied the grain and stacked it into sheaves. The youngest ones brought water and carried files to sharpen the gleaming blades when they became dull. These graceful, quiet movements across the road contrasted strangely with the commotion of tractor and combine moving through my uncle's fields in a cloud of dust and chaff. Or sometimes I'd go with my grandfather to the auction sales in the county, and always there would be knots of stern, work-hardened men, with small boys clinging wide-eyed to their hands. My grandfather, who had been raised by an Amish family, would often join them, speaking in dialect. The Amish boys and I would eye each other suspiciously until at last my grandfather moved on.

But it was not until the summer when I was fifteen that I got a really close look at a strict Amish family. Since cultivating with a team is much slower than with a tractor, the Amish sometimes fell behind in their work during the hot, moist July days when weeds seem to appear between the rows of beans or corn almost over night. To catch up, they would occasionally borrow a tractor, complete with driver, from their more modern neighbors. One evening Mr. Mast, who owned the Amish farm south of us, stopped by to ask my uncle if he might borrow our John Deere and me to cultivate one of his bean fields. The next morning I chugged noisily into their farmyard. The John Deere was the first internal combustion machine to enter their premises since the threshers had come the previous fall, so the whole family was turned out to greet me. Everyone except old Mrs. Mast, anyway. Most of the sect regarded only rubber-tired machines as instruments of the Devil, but she was one of the more strict believers who felt that even the steel-wheeled threshing machine was "worldly." Mr. Mast's oldest son, Freddie, later told me that she was upstairs pray-

ing, and had not said a word to any of the men since she found out they had borrowed the John Deere. She thought they had put her soul in jeopardy by bringing that "infernal machine" on the place.

But all of the others were there. Three generations were represented; old Mr. Mast in his black, broad-brimmed hat, white beard resting on the bib-front of his faded blue overalls; his two sons, the married one black-bearded while the other remained clean-shaven, according to custom; his two daughters and his daughter-in-law; and the four grandchildren. No one said much when I stopped in the driveway. There were a few "Hello's" and several nods, while the little ones hid behind the grown-ups' skirts and trouser legs and sneaked long searching looks at me and the tractor. Two big colliers ambled up to the tractor and sniffed suspiciously at the big, mud-caked rubber tires.

Freddie was in the barn hitching up a team to cultivate the field next to mine. Finally he led the big Percherons out into the bright sunlight of early morning, and I followed him down the lane. The horses shied, white-eyed, at the roar of the John Deere behind them, so I slowed down to a crawl and let them move out ahead. Finally my guide paused and waved me into a field on my right while he turned into the one across the way. I peeled off my shirt and started on my first trip down the bright green rows, watching the dull brown soil turn shiny-black as the cultivator blades tore into it. With the sun beating down on my back and shoulders and the heat and smell of the exhaust blowing back into my face, it seemed like any normal day on my uncle's place. I drove without stopping until mid-morning, when I heard a shout over the noise of the tractor. Killing the engine, I saw the old man moving towards me through the sudden silence, with his smallest grandson tagging along at his heels as he picked his way over the fresh furrows. They were still a good distance away, so I turned and looked towards the field across the lane while I waited for them to reach me. Freddie was riding on the primitive cultivator as it lurched and bucked through the sun-caked topsoil, and I could faintly hear the creaking and jingling of the harness as the horses leaned into it, the sweat turning white and foamy where the leather rubbed their backs. One of the colliers roamed the field in front of them in a lazy search for rabbits or field mice. The shimmering of heat-wave gave the scene an appearance of unreality, as if I were watching its reflection on the still surface of a farm

(Continued on Page 8)

Book Reviews

The Lancaster Mennonite Conference History and Background. By Ira D. Landis. Printed by the Mennonite Publishing House, Scottsdale, Pa., 1956. Pp. 114. \$5.00.

The Christian Nurture Committee of the Lancaster Mennonite Conference has sponsored this 114-page booklet, *The Lancaster Mennonite Conference History and Background*, written by Ira D. Landis, chairman of the Committee.

In the preface the author calls the book a "severely abridged textbook" and explains that it was written and published "since this story of the background of our history is not completely delineated on the pages of any English text, since a quarter of a century has elapsed following the publication of M. G. Weaver's *Lancaster Conference History*, and since our history has not been available for the increasing number of schools calling for this almost unknown choice history of the past..."

Approximately half of the book (Chapters I-VI) deals with the beginnings of Mennonitism—including both the Swiss Brethren in Switzerland and the Mennonites in Holland—with a discussion of their distinctive doctrines, their persecution, and evaluation by outsiders. Subsequent migrations within Europe and to the New World, culminating in the first permanent settlement—in the heart of the present Lancaster County—are outlined.

Included in the other half of the book (Chapters VII-XI) are descriptions of the first meeting of the Lancaster Mennonite Conference, activities of the Mennonites during the French and Indian Wars and the Revolutionary War, migrations from Lancaster County, the establishment of meetinghouses, and the beginning of the use of the English language, Sunday schools, and revival meetings. Especially interesting during the early period is the influence of Mennonite ideals in the writing of the State Constitution of Pennsylvania. The author mentions several divisions including those that resulted in small Mennonite groups, such as the Wenger Mennonites and the Horning Mennonites, that still exist in Lancaster County. The author then shows the expansion of Conference activities, including the organization of youth groups, old people's homes, an orphanage, a high school, elementary schools, and local and foreign missions.

The author's method of documentation in this book consists of briefly identifying sources and page numbers in the text itself rather than in footnotes. The book includes a

rather complete index and a bibliography.

At the end of each chapter is a list of questions for review and research, the answers to some of which are found in the text itself. Further research in outside sources would be necessary to answer others. These questions would probably be helpful if the book were used in a classroom situation. The book is appropriately illustrated with photographs of several Lancaster Conference leaders and a number of historic buildings, both in Lancaster County and in Europe.

While the book by its title is local in its scope, yet it should possess an appeal for Mennonites everywhere and, one suspects, to many outside of the Mennonite circle who are interested in history.

The author has been a very active student of Mennonite history and has done much historical research on the local level. It is hoped that this publication will not exhaust his contributions to Mennonite historical lore.

The reviewer is certain that the Mennonite reading public would be interested in having, from the pen of Ira D. Landis, a full-scale history of the Lancaster Conference, replete with facts and details from the exhaustive and careful research which this author has made on the subject.

—Samuel S. Wenger

Forks Mennonite Church, A Centennial History 1857-1957. By John C. Wenger, Conference Historian. Privately printed at Goshen, Indiana, 1957. Pp. 30.

This local church history, a treatment of the founding and the later life of the Forks Mennonite Church in Lagrange County, Indiana, is well written and an excellent example of its kind. Factual, including a list of ministers, and fourteen pages of photographs, it brings together a congregational history which church members, even if they are not particularly historically minded, can read and appreciate. The brochure grew from a talk given by the author at the time of the anniversary, but it is also an installment of a larger work in progress, *The Mennonites of Indiana and Michigan*, which he hopes to publish in 1959 (p. 15).

Many congregations in Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, and points farther west are currently reaching the century mark of their history. This example ought to be a stimulus for other congregations to write their history before records and memories are further defaced by time.

I. B. H.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF JOSEPH SOHM

(Continued from Page 1)

taining the history of the faith and doctrines of the Mennonite Church, from the days of the apostles down to 1606 [1660].

Mr. Sohm, after this enormous task was completed, became, so to speak, a more enthusiastic and devoted Christian than ever before. No doubt the translation of the history of God's people in these early centuries, their persecutions and sufferings, with their faithfulness and their devotion and steadfastness, made him stronger, more steadfast and more (devoted) than before, and he began to preach the gospel. [He] held meetings for a long time every evening in a building on the east side of Main street between Lexington and High streets [in Elkhart] and did much good to those who came to hear him.

Later he went back to New York City, where he again engaged in the printing business, and a flying report went the rounds that he again returned to the Catholic Church and became a devout worshipper in that faith. He died on March 12th in 1902, seventeen years ago, leaving a wife and two sons and one daughter to mourn his death. Peace to his ashes.

—Manuscript in the John F. Funk collection in the Archives of the Mennonite Church.

Twenty-Five Chapters on the Shenandoah Valley. By John W. Wayland. The Shenandoah Publishing House, Inc., Strasburg, Virginia, 1957. Pp. 14, 434. \$6.50.

This new, sizable work from Dr. Wayland substantially increases his contribution to the study of local history in the Shenandoah Valley. He calls this book "a topical history of the Valley." It is no sense a repeat performance but rather a filling in, a highlighting of subjects which he did not expand in his former works. Attention is given primarily to the pre-Civil War period, followed by a concise account of the War in the Valley. The Mennonite references, as in most of Wayland's books, are numerous. The Funk printing office, the Mennonite interest in music, and a study of Christian Newcomer's journal (Lancaster Mennonite turned United Brethren in Christ, who made 53 preaching trips into the Valley, according to Wayland) are some of the items of interest to Mennonites.

I. B. H.

THE WANDERING SOUL

(Continued from Page 4)

9. 1833. Die wandernde Seele . . . J. Howe at Philadelphia for G. W. Mentz and Son at Philadelphia.
10. 1843. Die wandernde Seele . . . Mentz and Rovoudt at Philadelphia.
11. 1847. Die wandernde Seele . . . Mentz and Rovoudt at Philadelphia.
12. 1870. Die wandernde Seele . . . Wm. G. Mentz at Philadelphia.
13. No date. Die wandernde Seele . . . Wm. G. Mentz at Philadelphia.
14. No date. Die wandernde Seele . . . Neue (12te Auflage). Schäfer und Koradi at Philadelphia.
15. No date. Die wandernde Seele . . . Neue (13te) Auflage. Schäfer und Koradi at Philadelphia.
16. No date. Die wandernde Seele . . . Neue (16te) Auflage. Schäfer und Koradi at Philadelphia.
17. 1919. Die wandernde Seele . . . die vierzehnte Auflage. Mennonite Publishing House, Scottsdale, Pennsylvania.
18. 1952. Die wandernde Seele . . . die 15. Auflage. By Light and Hope Publications, Berne, Indiana, for J. A. Raber, Baltic, Ohio.

II. Editions in the English Language

19. 1834. The Wandering Soul; Dialogues between the Wandering Soul and Adam, Noah, and Simon Cleophas. Comprising a History of the World, Sacred and Profane. . . . By John Philip Schaballe. Originally written in the Holland Language; Translated into German by Bernhart B. Brechbill. Translated from the Fourth American Edition into English, by I. Daniel Rupp. Author "Der Maertyr Geschichte," &c &c. To which a Chronological Table and a Copious Index are Added. Adapted to the Work. Second and Improved Edition with Engravings. L. Johnson at Philadelphia for I. D. Rupp and John Winebrenner at Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.
20. 1834. The Wandering Soul . . . Fourth American Edition. L. Johnson at Philadelphia for I. Daniel Rupp at Carlisle, Pa.
21. 1838. The Pilgrim Soul; or, Dialogues between the Pilgrim Soul and Adam, Noah and Simon Cleophas . . . Johnston and Stockton, Pittsburgh, Pa.
22. 1840. The Wandering Soul . . . J. V. Rigden at Woodstock, Virginia.
23. 1840. The Wandering Soul . . . Second and improved edition. L. Johnson at Philadelphia for I. D. Rupp at Harrisburg, Pa.
24. 1891. The Wandering Soul . . . The Virginian Office at Winchester, Virginia.
25. 1859. The Wandering Soul . . . New Revised Edition, with Engravings. Theo. F. Scheffer at Harrisburg.
26. 1874. The Wandering Soul . . . Second Revised English Edition. John Baer's Sons, Lancaster, Pa.

Then again brotherly love is shown in this, that among ourselves we serve one another by benevolently reaching out our hand, not only with spiritual, but also with temporal gifts, which we have received from God.

—Dirk Philips

"WALK YE . . .

(Continued from Page 6)

pond. I turned back and saw the erect old man, wisps of his beard waving in the fitful summer wind, and the boy striding along beneath a round, narrow-brimmed straw hat. The boy was carrying a stone jug and a tin cup, hugging the jug to him with both arms as he stepped across the rows. As they neared the tractor he drew shyly back behind his grandfather and nervously studied the ground. The old man smiled up at me and asked me in his heavy accent if everything were going well. I nodded self-consciously and commented that there were remarkably few rocks in the field. He laughed and told me that he had helped his father pull them out nearly fifty years before. The boy had filled the tin cup from the jug, and he handed it up to me, squinting into the sun. It was buttermilk, fresh from the churn. When I had drained the cup I handed it back down to him. Mr. Mast was critically examining the turned earth between the rows of beans, and, after a time, remarked that the tractor was fast and did a good job. He looked at the John Deere and resignedly sighed and shook his head. Then he called his grandson and stood back while I started the engine. As I drove off, they watched for a moment, and then turned back toward the house. I thought of the old man as a boy, helping his father pry the boulders from the ground, and of the little boy, outwardly a perfect replica of his grandfather as he had been many years before, and roaming the same fields. I wondered how much longer they could hold out against the "worldly" ways they had thus far rejected.

I finished the field just before noon, and pulled out into the hot and dusty lane. Closing the gate behind me, I drove toward the house, enjoying the satisfied feeling, that comes with the end of a job, and looking forward to spending the afternoon over at the gravel pit, swimming and fishing. When I reached the farmyard, one of the girls ran out of the house and motioned for me to stop. I squirmed into my shirt and followed her into the bare and immaculate kitchen. The walls and ceiling were painted a dull white, like every other room in the house, and a kerosene lamp hung over the table, suspended by a brass chain. An old wood-burning stove filled one corner of the room, with flames flickering yellow and orange through the translucent mica panes in the fire-door. There were no curtains at the windows, and no decoration of any kind anywhere in the room. Mrs. Mast and her daughters were

preparing dinner, moving quietly and efficiently and occasionally exchanging rapid-fire phrases in dialect. When the old Mrs. Mast saw me, she led me out to the porch and loaded me down with boxes of fresh raspberries and jars of preserves, made that morning and left there to cool. She asked me to take them to my grandmother. I thanked her and walked out to the tractor. Evidently she had overcome some of her fear of the John Deere, for as I started down the road she stood motionless by the gate in her blue dress and white cap, shading her eyes with her hand as she watched me go.

The last time I went to the farm, I was surprised to see two new tractors and a combine sitting in front of the Mast's barn, and a new Ford parked in the driveway. My uncle told me that after old Mr. Mast had died the previous Fall, Freddie immediately joined the Mennonite Church and modernized the farm. His brother Ivan was working in town as an auto salesman. Only old Mrs. Mast remained true to the old ways. I feel sorry for her, forced to live out her days in an atmosphere which she considers sinful and "worldly". But that's the way it is in many of the old Amish families in the County. The young are being held back by the old, but the latter know that it's just a matter of time before the forces of youth and progress will win out, and the sect will melt away and become history.

You hardly ever see a buggy on the pike any more. It may be due to progress, but it still seems sort of a shame.

(From *The University of Virginia Magazine*, Easter, 1957, by permission.)

The sixth ordinance which Christ has instituted for his congregation is the keeping of all his commandments, for he demands of all his disciples a godly life, that they walk according to the gospel, openly confess the truth before men, deny self, and faithfully follow in his footsteps, voluntarily take up the cross, forsake all things, and earnestly seek first the Kingdom of God and all his righteousness, the unseen heavenly things, and eternal life. . . . This is the heavenly philosophy, which Jesus Christ, the Son of God, received of his Father, brought down from heaven, and taught his disciples. This is the counsel and will of God, the saving doctrine of Jesus Christ, and the testimony of the Holy Spirit.

—Dirk Philips

